

REMARKS

Claims 15, 16, 20 and 131-152 were previously under consideration in the application, with claims 135, 139, 142-144 and 150-152 being withdrawn from consideration. Claims 15, 16, 20, 131-134, 136-138, 140, 141 and 145-149 stand rejected.

Claims 16, 133, 137-139, and 146-148 have been canceled by way of this Response. Therefore, Claims 15, 20, 131, 132, 134-136, 140-145 and 149-152 are currently pending. Of these, Claims 135, 142-144 and 150-152 are withdrawn from consideration.

Initially, the Applicant would like to thank Examiner Ilan for her courtesy and consideration during the personal interview with Applicant's representative and inventor Kesh. It is believed that significant progress toward disposition of the application was made during this interview. Specifically, it was agreed that neither Sakai nor Conlee disclose a circular seam securing a shortened tether to the second panel of the multi-panel airbag cushion in the manner of Applicant's invention. It was further agreed that these features would be incorporated into the claims.

Claim Objections

The claims were objected to because of misnumbering (specifically, there were two claims numbered 147 and two claims numbered 149.) Furthermore, Claim 141 had a typographical error, rendering it dependent from Claim 144 rather than 140. Claims 147 and higher have now been officially renumbered by way of this Response in the manner utilized by the Examiner during examination to remove the double numbering. Therefore, it is believed that the objection has been obviated. In addition, it was noted that Claim 144 included a typographical error, in that it was dependent on Claim 146 rather than 143, as apparently was intended. Therefore, this claim has also been amended (although it is currently withdrawn from consideration), to correct this typographical error.

Drawings

The approval of the drawings submitted on November 13, 2003 is acknowledged with appreciation.

Specification

The specification was objected to as not containing the language of Claims 146-148. These claims have been canceled by way of this Response.

Claim Rejections- 35 USC 112

Claims 147 and 148 were rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph. These claims have been canceled by way of this Response.

Claim 137 was also rejected under 35 USC 112. This claim has also been canceled by way of this Response.

Claim Rejections- 35 USC 103

Claims 15, 16, 20, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136-138, 140, 141, and 145-149 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai et al (JP 409188218) in view of Conlee et al (WO 00/12359.) As discussed in the interview, Sakai is directed to a bag having a first bag with a "breaking part" that is designed to burst when force over a first set value is applied by the gas and the gas ejects from the first bag into the second bag. As acknowledged in the Office Action, the tethers illustrated in Sakai would not form a concave area in the second panel like that of the instant invention. Conlee is directed to a multi-panel bag having two tethers joined to the panel via two separate rectangular seams. There is no disclosure or suggestion of using a circular seam in the manner claimed by Applicant, or of having tethers shortened in the manner set forth in Applicant's claims. Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in the Sakai or Conlee references to move the Sakai tethers toward the center of the second panel, and in fact, doing so may affect how the bursting required by Sakai would perform. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner find that any issues remain outstanding following consideration of this Response, she is invited to telephone the undersigned in the interest of resolving such matters in an expedient manner.

Respectfully submitted,



Sara M. Current
Reg. No. 38,057

Milliken & Company, M-495
920 Milliken Road
P.O. Box 1926
Spartanburg, SC 29304
Telephone: (864) 503-1596
Facsimile: (864) 503-1999